



## **Family Cohesion, Body Self Image, Impostor Phenomenon and Existential Anxiety among Young Adults**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study aimed to determine whether family cohesion had an impact on impostor phenomenon, body self-image and existential anxiety, and to assess the implications of the findings for this demographic. The results indicated that family cohesion was correlated with impostor phenomenon, body self-image, and existential anxiety in young adults.

More specifically, the study revealed a positive correlation between family cohesion and body self-image, as well as negative correlations between family cohesion and both impostor phenomenon and existential anxiety. The study suggests that family plays a crucial role in shaping the self-concept of young adults and facilitating the development of personal and social identity, enabling them to effectively manage the demands of daily life and existential issues.

In summary, this study adds to our understanding of the diverse factors that impact the well-being of young adults and emphasizes the importance of addressing both personal and familial factors to promote positive body self-image and manage existential anxiety.

*Keywords: Family Cohesion, Impostor phenomenon, Existential anxiety, Young adults.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Family cohesion refers to the emotional connectedness and sense of unity that exists within a family unit. It is a multidimensional construct that encompasses a range of factors, including communication, support, shared values and beliefs, and the ability to resolve conflicts and work together effectively.

Family has a direct and most significant impact on young adults, this is because family acts as a major agent of socialization for young adults. Families have ways of promoting desired behaviour by either giving verbal praise or tangible rewards, while also discouraging undesirable behaviour through disapproval. Thus, it can be rightly stated that family plays an instrumental role in the psychological welfare and development of young adults.

### **THE CIRCUMPLEX MODEL**

The most significant model to explain family cohesion is the Circumplex Model which was originally developed by David Olson, Douglas Sprenkle, and Candyce Russell. Family cohesion has been defined as the emotional bonding that family members have toward one another (Olson, Russell, & Sprenkle, 1982). The construct of family cohesion is based upon the Circumplex Model. Moreover, the three major dimensions of family systems which are included in the Circumplex Model are: cohesion, flexibility, and communication.

The Circumplex Model of Family Systems was developed to bridge the gap that typically exists between research, theory, and practice (Olson et al., 1989). The dimensions of family cohesion within the circumplex model can be diagnosed and measured using various variables. These include emotional bonding, boundaries, coalitions, time spent together, physical space, relationships with friends, decision-making processes, shared interests, and recreational activities. The focus of the family cohesion construct is to understand how families strike a balance between individuality and togetherness.

In Olson's model, the concept of flexibility is explored by evaluating the level of modifications that can occur in leadership, the relationships between roles, and family regulations.

Thus, the Circumplex Model is based on the idea that families naturally go through changes over time in response to changes in their environment. This type of change, called "second-order change," involves a change in the rules that govern the family, resulting in the creation of a "new" family that is better suited to its circumstances.

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## **BODY SELF IMAGE**

The development of our self-image is a consequence of the learning process. Our early experiences, particularly those involving our interactions with parents and caregivers, play a significant role in shaping our self-image. These experiences reinforce our beliefs and emotions regarding ourselves, influencing our self-image.

Body self-image refers to a person's perception and evaluation of their physical appearance, including their body shape, size, and overall appearance. It encompasses an individual's thoughts, feelings, and attitudes toward their body.

Body self-image has a significant impact on an individual's mental and physical well-being. Positive body self-image is associated with increased self-esteem, confidence, and overall life satisfaction. Conversely, negative body self-image can lead to feelings of shame, anxiety, and depression, as well as disordered eating and body dysmorphic disorder. It is important for individuals to develop a healthy and positive body self-image and challenge negative thoughts and beliefs about their bodies.

It is important for young adults to develop a positive body self-image and to challenge negative thoughts and beliefs about their bodies.

The relationship between body self-image and family cohesion is complex and can be influenced by a variety of factors. In general, a positive family environment and strong family relationships can have a positive impact on body self-image, while negative family dynamics can contribute to negative body self-image.

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## **IMPOSTOR PHENOMENON**

The impostor phenomenon, which is also referred to as impostor syndrome, is a psychological experience where an individual consistently feels incompetent and uncertain about their abilities, despite having proof of their competence and achievements. This persistent sense of inadequacy can cause self-doubt and undermine an individual's confidence in their abilities.

Research has suggested that a lack of family cohesion can contribute to the development of the impostor phenomenon, particularly in children and adolescents. If a child grows up in a family environment lacking emotional support and validation, they may start to question their self-worth and doubt their abilities. Moreover, they may feel that they are not competent enough to meet their family's expectations, thereby contributing to the development of impostor feelings. Criticism or rejection from family members can also contribute to a negative self-image and a belief that they are not capable enough.

Furthermore, when children and adolescents do not feel that they have a secure and supportive family environment, they may seek validation from external sources, such as peers or teachers. This can contribute to a reliance on external validation, which can further perpetuate impostor feelings.

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## **EXISTENTIAL ANXIETY**

Existential anxiety refers to a deep and pervasive sense of uncertainty and unease that arises from the awareness of our own mortality and the fundamental meaninglessness of life. It is a type of anxiety that arises from contemplating the "big" questions of life, such as the purpose and meaning of existence, the inevitability of death, and the potential absence of an afterlife or ultimate meaning. Existential anxiety can be triggered by various life events or circumstances, such as major life transitions, experiences of loss, or simply by the process of aging and becoming more aware of one's own finitude.

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## **PAUL TILLICH'S THEORY OF EXISTENTIAL ANXIETY**

Paul Tillich was a prominent theologian and philosopher who developed a well-known model of existential anxiety. According to Tillich, existential anxiety arises from the tension between our finite and limited selves and our desire for something infinite and transcendent. He believed that this tension is a fundamental aspect of the human condition and that it can be experienced in several ways, such as through feelings of emptiness, despair, or alienation.

Tillich's model of existential anxiety emphasizes the importance of embracing the paradoxical nature of human existence, in which we are both finite and infinite, and highlights the role of faith and ultimate concern in coping with the anxieties of life. Overall, Tillich's model of existential anxiety has had a significant impact on the fields of philosophy, theology, and psychology, and remains influential in contemporary discussions of the human condition.

Thus, the correlation between existential anxiety and family cohesion is intricate and can be impacted by various factors at both individual and family levels.

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## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### ***FAMILY COHESION***

**Çetin (2021)**, studied the relation between: Religiosity, family cohesion and ethical leadership: a study of family firms in Turkey, and found that family cohesion, intrinsic religiosity, and spiritual well-being-oriented religiosity were positively related to ethical leadership levels rated by family member managers. However, secular religiosity was negatively related to ethical leadership levels. While none of these variables were significantly correlated

with ethical leadership perceptions of non-family member employees, there was a positive correlation between ethical leadership perceptions of family managers and those of employees.

**Daniels & Bryan (2021)** found that adolescents who have undergone multiple incidents of complex trauma were found to have lower levels of resilience. Nevertheless, if they reported having a supportive family environment and strong family cohesion during their pre-adulthood years, they were more likely to demonstrate resilience in young adulthood despite their traumatic experiences. Therefore, family environment and cohesion can serve as protective factors against the adverse effects of complex trauma.

**Ni et al., (2021)** studied the impact of family environment on the life satisfaction among young adults with personality as a mediator and concluded that family cohesion and conflict indirectly affected life satisfaction by influencing the two personality dimensions of extraversion and neuroticism. These results indicate that enhancing the family environment and fostering better relationships between family members could lead to greater life satisfaction and increased happiness among young adults.

**Jimeno et al., (2021)**, studied the role of attachment and family functioning in problematic smartphone use in young adults, and found that cohesion and enmeshed functioning were the most reliable predictors of problematic smartphone use. Additionally, the preoccupied attachment scale was the only variable that had indirect effects on problematic smartphone use through the enmeshed family functioning variable.

### ***IMPOSTOR PHENOMENON***

**Chakravarty (2022)**, studied the Faculty experiences of the impostor phenomenon in STEM fields, and found that the impostor phenomenon was found to be potentially associated with the following factors: 1) comparing oneself to peers, 2) being evaluated by faculty members, 3) receiving public recognition, 4) experiencing anticipatory fear of not knowing, and 5) perceiving a lack of competence.

**Lavelle et al., (2022)**, studied Addressing the elephant in the room: Exploring the impostor phenomenon in evaluation and found three constructs of the impostor phenomenon in evaluators: Discount, Luck, and Fake. Qualitative data analysis revealed gender-specific coping strategies for dealing with the phenomenon. The researchers conducted thematic analysis to develop a proposed set of solutions to mitigate the negative effects of the impostor phenomenon on evaluators.

**Wydra et al., (2021)**, studied Maladaptive perfectionism, impostor phenomenon, and suicidal ideation among medical students and found that significant positive correlations exist between maladaptive perfectionism, impostor phenomenon, and suicidal ideation. The impostor phenomenon score was identified as a mediator of the relationship between maladaptive perfectionism and suicidal ideation.

**Yaffe (2021)**, studied the students' recollections of parenting styles and impostor phenomenon: The mediating role of social anxiety and found that the perceived level of parental care was indirectly associated with the students' expression of the impostor phenomenon through social anxiety, both for mothers and fathers. Specifically, students who perceived their parents as less caring exhibited greater expressions of the impostor phenomenon because they experienced greater social anxiety.

### ***BODY SELF IMAGE***

**Ameen et al., (2022)** studied It's all part of the customer journey: The impact of augmented reality, chatbots, and social media on the body image and self-esteem of Generation Z female consumers and found that the perception of augmentation among women from Generation Z has a positive impact on their body self image, self-esteem, and actual purchasing behavior.

**Meydan et al., (2021)** studied Attachment insecurities and body image self-consciousness among women: The mediating role of pornography use and concluded that women who are anxiously attached to their romantic partner may be more vulnerable to the impact of pornography use on their body self image-consciousness.

**McComb et al.,** studied The effects of self-disclaimer Instagram captions on young women's mood and body image: The moderating effect of participants' own photo manipulation practices and found that the type of self-disclaimer did not have a significant impact on body self image or mood, indicating that no type of self-disclaimer had a beneficial effect. However, specific disclaimers were more effective than other disclaimers in reducing the tendency to compare one's body with others, especially for women who were highly affected by photo manipulation.

**Turk et al.,** studied Determining the potential link of self-compassion with eating pathology and body image among women: a longitudinal mediational study and concluded that self-compassion is related to eating disorders and disturbances in body self image, and it indicates that shame plays a crucial role in this association.

### ***EXISTENTIAL ANXIETY***

**Önol & Engin (2022)** studied Existential anxiety and sense of guilt for mental health and concluded that actions and choices are not as significant as our overall identity as individuals. This sense of guilt that we feel is not considered neurotic or a symptom that requires treatment.

**Geogiou and Kleftras (2022)** studied Existential Factors' Impact on Body Dissatisfaction: An Empirical Study of Greek Adolescents and Adults and concluded that there are significant relationships between variables related to Body Dissatisfaction and both Existential Anxiety and the Search for Meaning in Life. This suggests that issues related to one's existence and purpose have an impact on one's level of Body Dissatisfaction.

**Stone (2022)** studied The Power of Existential Anxiety in Shaping Perceptions and concluded that the desire to avoid the unknown that comes with death is a powerful motivator for all the efforts we make to develop, protect, and nurture our sense of self and belonging. This need to avoid death is a major driving force behind our search for meaning and purpose in life.

**Mandalaparthi & Abraham (2021)** studied the Exploring existential anxiety among Indian youth: Prevalence and gender differences and found that the prevalence rate of EA among the participants was found to be medium-low. Moreover, there are no significant gender differences in the experience of this anxiety, except for the impact of social pressures, which seems to affect females more than males.

## ***RATIONALE***

The prominent studies which have been conducted in the past have shown that family cohesion is associated with a range of positive outcomes, including better mental health and well-being. However, the impact of family cohesion on specific aspects of young adults' psychological functioning, such as body self-image, impostor phenomenon, and existential anxiety, is less well understood.

Given the potential importance of family cohesion for young adults' psychological functioning, the aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between family cohesion and body self-image, impostor phenomenon, and existential anxiety among young adults. Specifically, this study will examine whether higher levels of family cohesion are associated with better body self-image, lower levels of impostor phenomenon, and lower levels of existential anxiety among young adults.

This study will contribute to our understanding of the role of family cohesion in young adults' psychological functioning and may have important implications for promoting positive outcomes among this population.

The present study aims to address several important research questions. Firstly, the relationship between family cohesion and impostor phenomenon among young adults will be investigated. Impostor phenomenon is a common experience among high-achieving individuals and has been associated with a range of negative outcomes, including anxiety and depression. While previous research has suggested that family relationships may play a crucial role in the development of impostor phenomenon, the precise nature of this relationship remains unclear. The study intends to clarify the specific role of family cohesion in the development of impostor phenomenon.

Secondly, the study will examine the association between family cohesion and body self-image among young adults. Previous research has indicated that family relationships can significantly influence body image, but the mechanisms behind this association remain poorly understood. By shedding light on the aspects of family cohesion that are most intricately linked to body self-image, the study aims to provide valuable insights into this relationship.

Thirdly, the study will explore the association between family cohesion and existential anxiety among young adults. Existential anxiety is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by numerous factors such as personal values, social relationships, and cultural norms. Previous research has suggested that family relationships may also be an essential factor in the development of existential anxiety, but the precise nature of this relationship is not well understood.

Overall, this study will make an important contribution to our understanding of the role of family cohesion in young adults' psychological functioning.

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## **METHODS OF STUDY**

### ***PURPOSE***

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between family cohesion, impostor phenomenon, body self-image, and existential anxiety in young adults. The study aims to explore the potential implications of these findings within the given population.

### ***OBJECTIVE***

The objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between family cohesion and impostor phenomenon, body self-image, and existential anxiety. The study aims to determine whether family cohesion can predict these variables.

1. To measure family cohesion, impostor phenomenon, body self-image, and existential anxiety using valid and reliable measures.
2. To analyze the data collected to determine the degree of correlation of family cohesion with the other three variables.
3. To determine the extent to which family cohesion is correlated with impostor phenomenon, body self-image, and existential anxiety among young adults.

**HYPOTHESIS****NULL HYPOTHESIS**

1. There is no significant relationship between family cohesion and impostor phenomenon, body self-image, and existential anxiety among young adults.

**ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS**

1. The higher level of family cohesion is correlated with lower levels of impostor phenomenon, higher level of body self-image and lower level of existential anxiety among young adults.

**VARIABLES****FAMILY COHESION**

"Family cohesion has been defined as the emotional bonding that family members have toward one another." (Olson, Russell, & Sprenkle, 1982).

**IMPOSTOR PHENOMENON**

"Impostor Phenomenon has been defined as a psychological pattern in which an individual doubts their accomplishments and has a persistent fear of being exposed as a "fraud" despite evidence of competence" (Clance, 1978).

**BODY SELF IMAGE**

"Body Self - Image has been defined as the multifaceted psychological experience of embodiment, especially one's physical appearance as evaluated by oneself in relation to others" (Cash, 1985).

**EXISTENTIAL ANXIETY**

"Existential Anxiety has been defined as a fundamental aspect of the human condition that arises from the awareness of our own mortality and the ultimate meaninglessness of our existence" (Tillich 1952).

**SAMPLE**

The sample for the following study consisted of young adults in the age range of 18-20 years. The sampling method which was utilised for the same was Accidental Sampling. Accidental sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which individuals are selected for a sample based on their availability or accessibility, rather than through a randomised selection process.

**TOOLS****FACES IV (FAMILY ADAPTABILITY AND COHESION EVALUATION SCALE IV)**

The FACES IV (Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale IV) is a widely used self-report questionnaire designed to assess family cohesion and flexibility. It was developed in 1982 by David Olson and his colleagues and has undergone several revisions, with the most recent version published in 2011. The FACES IV questionnaire consists of 62 items.

Reliability : The FACES IV has shown good internal consistency and test-retest reliability across various samples with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .70 to .90.

Validity : The FACES IV questionnaire has displayed good construct validity, as evidenced by significant correlations observed between the cohesion and flexibility subscales and other measures of family functioning, such as communication, adaptability, and satisfaction.

**CLANCE IMPOSTOR PHENOMENON SCALE (CIPS)**

The Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS) is a self-administered questionnaire that is commonly used to assess impostor phenomenon (IP) in individuals. The questionnaire was developed by Dr. Pauline Clance and Dr. Suzanne Imes, and it comprises 20 items.

Reliability : The CIPS demonstrates strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.70 to 0.90 in various studies, indicating that the items in the scale are measuring the same construct.

Validity : The CIPS has also demonstrated good construct validity, as it is positively correlated with measures of anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and negative affectivity, and negatively correlated with measures of self-efficacy, self-esteem, and positive affectivity.

**BODY SELF IMAGE QUESTIONNAIRE (BSIQ - SF)**

The 27-item version of the BSIQ is a shorter version that assesses the same three aspects of body self-image: appearance evaluation, appearance orientation, and body areas satisfaction.

Reliability : The 27-item version of the Body Self-Image Questionnaire (BSIQ) has been found to have high internal consistency for all three subscales, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .81 to .94 in reliability studies conducted by Franzoi and Shields (1984).

Validity : Validity studies of the 27-item version of the BSIQ have shown that it has strong convergent and discriminant validity with other measures of body image, self-esteem, and depression, as demonstrated by Franzoi and Shields (1984). The questionnaire has also been found to be sensitive to changes in body image over time.

### EXISTENTIAL ANXIETY QUESTIONNAIRE (EAQ)

The Existential Anxiety Questionnaire (EAQ) was created in the 1950s by Paul Tillich, a philosopher and theologian, with the purpose of evaluating existential anxiety. It consists of 13 items.

Reliability : According to reliability studies, the Existential Anxiety Questionnaire (EAQ) has demonstrated high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.89 to 0.93 in different studies conducted by Kopta (1984) and Tavakoli & Hajloo (2013). Validity : Validity studies of the EAQ have supported its construct validity, as it has shown a positive correlation with other measures of anxiety, depression, and general psychological distress in studies by Kopta (1984) and Tavakoli & Hajloo (2013).

### ADMINISTRATION

The compiled questionnaire which consisted of FACES IV, CIPS, BSIQ - SF, & EAQ was distributed to the sample which were randomly selected from the population.

Informed consent was taken from the participants regarding their participation in the study. The participants were only asked to mention their age and gender, in order to maintain the code of confidentiality. The participants took 20 - 25 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

### DATA ANALYSIS

The statistical technique which was utilised for this study was Pearson correlation method.

Pearson correlation is a statistical technique that measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two continuous variables. It is a commonly used technique in research and is particularly useful for exploring the relationship between two variables, identifying potential associations, and making predictions.

The Pearson correlation coefficient, denoted by "r", can range from -1 to 1, where -1 represents a perfect negative correlation, 0 represents no correlation, and 1 represents a perfect positive correlation. A positive correlation indicates that as one variable increases, the other variable also tends to increase, while a negative correlation indicates that as one variable increases, the other variable tends to decrease.

### RESULTS

		<u>FACES IV</u>	<u>BSIQ</u>
SCORE ON FACES IV	Pearson Correlation Signi. ( 2 tailed) N	1 130	. 256** .003 130
SCORE ON BSIQ	Pearson Correlation Signi. (2 tailed) N	.256** .003 130	1 130

\*\* Correlation significant at 0.01 level

The above table indicates that there is a significant positive correlation between the scores in FACES IV and BSIQ, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.256. This means that as scores on FACES IV increase, scores on BSIQ tend to increase as well.

The fact that the correlation coefficient is significant at the 0.01 level with a p-value of 0.003 indicates that this relationship is unlikely to be due to chance. In other words, it can be reasonably interpreted that the correlation observed between these two variables is a real effect, rather than simply a random fluctuation in the data.

Additionally, the strength of the correlation coefficient (0.256) suggests that while the relationship is statistically significant, it is moderately strong.

		FACES IV	CLANCE IP
SCORES ON FACES IV	Pearson Correlation Signi. (2 tailed) N	1 130	-.262** .003 130
SCORES ON CLANCE IP	Pearson Correlation Signi. (2 tailed) N	-.262** .003 130	1 130

\*\* Correlation significant at 0.01 level

The above table indicates that there is a significant negative correlation between scores on FACES IV and Clance IP, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of -0.262. This means that as scores on FACES IV increase, scores on Clance IP tend to decrease, and vice versa.

The fact that the correlation coefficient is significant at the 0.01 level with a p-value of 0.003 indicates that this relationship is unlikely to be due to chance. In other words, it can be interpreted with reasonable confidence that the correlation observed between these two variables is a real effect, rather than simply a random fluctuation in the data.

The negative association between the two measures may be meaningful in understanding individuals' perceptions of their own competence and self-efficacy.

However, further research would be needed to understand the causality between the variables.

		FACES IV	EAQ
SCORES ON FACES IV	Pearson Correlation Signi. (2 tailed) N	1 130	-.197* .025 130
SCORES ON EAQ	Pearson Correlation Signi. (2 tailed) N	-.197* .025 130	1 130*

\*Correlation significant at 0.05 level

The above table indicates that there is a significant negative correlation between scores on FACES IV and EAQ, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of -0.197. This means that as scores on FACES IV increase, scores on EAQ tend to decrease, and vice versa.

The fact that the correlation coefficient is significant at the 0.05 level with a p-value of 0.025 indicates that this relationship is unlikely to be due to chance. In other words, it can be interpreted with reasonable confidence that the correlation observed between these two variables is a real effect, rather than simply a random fluctuation in the data.

It's important to note that a negative correlation does not necessarily imply that one variable causes the other to decrease. Instead, it suggests that there may be an inverse relationship between the two variables, but the direction of causality is unclear.

## DISCUSSION

Family cohesion refers to the level of emotional closeness, communication, and support within a family. Body self-image, on the other hand, refers to an individual's subjective thoughts, feelings, and attitudes towards their own body, including its size, shape, and appearance.

The results indicate that there exists a positive correlation between family cohesion and body self-image. In other words, individuals who perceive their family as more cohesive are more likely to have a positive body self-image. Therefore it suggests that family dynamics play a role in shaping an individual's self-perception and body image.

The implications of this finding are relevant for young adults who are still developing their sense of self and identity. Positive body self-image has been linked to various positive outcomes such as higher self-esteem, better mental health, and lower risk of eating disorders. Therefore, fostering family cohesion can be an important protective factor for young adults against negative body image and related issues.

Family can act as a protective factor towards body self-image in a number of ways. Firstly, families that are emotionally close and supportive can provide a safe and secure environment for their children to develop a positive sense of self. When children feel loved and valued by their family, they are more likely to feel good about themselves and their bodies.

Secondly, families that communicate openly and honestly about body image and related issues can help their children develop a healthy and realistic understanding of what a "normal" body looks like.

Finally, families can provide a supportive network for their children if they do struggle with negative body image or related issues. This can involve providing emotional support, seeking professional help if needed, and helping their children develop coping strategies to deal with negative body image.

In current times, where social media and societal pressures often promote unrealistic beauty standards, a positive body self-image is becoming increasingly challenging to maintain.

Thus, high family cohesion can be a valuable resource for young adults in building a high and a healthy body self image.

Impostor Phenomenon has been defined as a psychological pattern in which an individual doubts their accomplishments and has a persistent fear of being exposed as a "fraud" despite evidence of competence.

The results indicate that there exists a negative correlation between family cohesion and impostor phenomenon. The negative correlation between family cohesion and impostor phenomenon can be explained by the fact that family cohesion can promote a sense of belonging, acceptance, and validation in young adults. When young adults feel connected to their families and supported in their goals and aspirations, they are less likely to experience feelings of self-doubt and insecurity.

Moreover, family cohesion can foster an environment of open communication and honest feedback, which can help young adults develop a realistic and accurate sense of their abilities and accomplishments. This can prevent young adults from feeling like impostors despite their success.

The implications of this finding are particularly relevant in current times when young adults are facing increasing pressure to excel in their academic and professional pursuits. The prevalence of impostor phenomenon can lead to negative outcomes such as anxiety, depression, and decreased performance. Therefore, promoting family cohesion may be an effective way to mitigate impostor phenomenon among young adults.

Therefore it can be understood that family cohesion can serve as a protective factor against impostor phenomenon in young adults. This highlights the importance of building strong family relationships and support networks to promote the well-being of young adults in today's high-pressure society.

Existential Anxiety has been defined as a fundamental aspect of the human condition that arises from the awareness of our own mortality and the ultimate meaninglessness of our existence. This type of anxiety can be particularly prevalent among young adults as they navigate major life transitions and strive to find purpose and meaning in their lives.

The negative correlation between family cohesion and existential anxiety which has been observed in the results can be explained by the fact that family cohesion can provide a sense of connection, purpose, and security in young adults. When young adults feel connected to their families and have a strong sense of belonging, they may be less likely to experience feelings of existential angst.

Family cohesion can provide a supportive environment that encourages personal growth. When young adults have the emotional and practical support of their families, they may feel more empowered to explore their interests, pursue their passions, and find meaning and purpose in their lives.

The implications of this finding are particularly relevant in the current scenario where young adults are facing increasing pressures to succeed and make decisions about their future. Existential anxiety can lead to negative outcomes such as depression, hopelessness, and indecision, which can hinder personal growth and development, if not dealt with in an efficient manner.

It is important to note that existential anxiety is a natural and unavoidable part of life. In fact, it can be harnessed in a healthy manner to motivate personal growth and development. When young adults acknowledge their mortality and the uncertainty of life, they may be more likely to seize opportunities, take risks, and make meaningful contributions to society.

Thus, although physical death destroys us, the idea of death saves us. By confronting the realm of existential anxiety young adults develop a sense of self awareness that they are finite and thus they do not have an indefinite period of time to do what they truly love and want to do. This, in turn, makes them realise that not only action, but inaction is also a decision.

Therefore, promoting family cohesion may be an effective way to prevent and mitigate existential anxiety among young adults. This can involve fostering open communication, providing emotional support, and encouraging healthy coping strategies such as self-reflection.

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## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between family cohesion, impostor phenomenon, body self-image, and existential anxiety among young adults.

Therefore, it can be concluded that; family cohesion is positively correlated with body self image and negatively correlated with impostor phenomenon and existential anxiety among young adults.

In conclusion, the findings reveal that family cohesion which refers to the level of emotional bonding towards family members is positively correlated with body self image. On the other hand, family cohesion is negatively correlated with impostor phenomenon and existential anxiety.



This in turn helps us to understand that family not only acts as a primary agent of socialisation for young adults but also helps them to shape their constructs of self in a healthy manner. Moreover, healthy levels of family cohesion between the family members forges an optimal personal and social identity for young adults which in turn helps them to deal with the demands of their everyday life in a proactive manner and allows them to deal with the ultimate givens of existence in a rational manner.

In summary, this study advances the understanding of the multiple factors that influence the well-being of young adults and emphasises the need to address both familial and personal factors in promoting positive body self-image and maintaining existential anxiety in an optimal manner.

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## LIMITATIONS & SUGGESTIONS

The limitations of the given research study are as follows;

1. The sample for the study was specifically selected from the premises of Amity University Lucknow. Thus, one way in order to improve the generalizability of the study is to select samples across the diverse pan Indian population.
2. This study examined the correlation between family cohesion and body self-image, impostor phenomenon and existential anxiety, which in turn provided a significant understanding of these constructs among the young adults in the current times. However, in order to develop a detailed understanding of the effect of these constructs onto each other, an experimental study can be conducted by taking two constructs and studying them with each other. This can provide a greater level of clarity pertaining to the causal effects between the constructs.
3. Since the participants were provided with a self report questionnaire, there might have been incidence of social desirability and acquiescence, thus, in order to prevent this one can perform an experimental study by studying two constructs and their effects onto each other, in order to acquire a greater sense of understanding.
4. Since the study utilised Pearson correlation it might be amenable to the effect of outliers and significant confounding variables, thus one way to prominently deal with the same is to not only conduct experimental studies but also to increase the size of the sample.

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